

Caucus on Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children. And, just yesterday, I introduced the Protecting Children Against Crime Act of 2003, S.810.

I thank Senators GRASSLEY, HUTCHISON, and SHELBY for joining me as original cosponsors of the Protecting Children Against Crime Act of 2003. This important legislation would help protect our nation's children from the most heinous of criminals—child abductors, child pornographers, and others who would exploit or abuse children.

Every day, our local police and prosecutors are on the front line in the fight against the criminals who target children, and they deserve recognition for their hard work. However, the data suggest that law enforcement is fighting an uphill battle—child victimization remains a large, pervasive, and extremely troubling problem in the United States.

According to the Congressional Research Service, up to one in three girls and one in seven boys will be sexually abused in this nation before they reach the age of 18. Many child molesters prey upon dozens of victims before they are reported to law enforcement. Furthermore, some child molesters evade detection for long periods because many children never report the abuse. In fact, Bureau of Justice Statistics suggests that between 60 percent and 80 percent of child molestations and 69 percent of sexual assaults are never reported to the police. Of those sexual assaults that are reported, 71 percent of the victims are children.

We also have a long way to go on behalf of missing children. According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, in 2001, 840,279 persons—adults and juveniles—were reported missing and entered into the FBI's national crime computer. As many as 725,000 of those reported missing were juveniles. On average, 2,000 children per day were reported missing to law enforcement in 2001, according to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Most missing children are eventually returned safely to their parents, but a small group of them are victims of more predatory abductors. The average victim of abduction and murder is a "low risk" 11-year-old girl from a middle-class neighborhood with a stable family relationship who has initial contact with an abductor within one-quarter mile of her home—this is according to a report by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Washington State Attorney General's Office.

For all of these reasons, it is vitally important that Congress do everything in its power to support parents and law enforcement in their efforts to protect our nation's most vulnerable citizens. Enacting the Protecting Children Against Crime Act of 2003 would be a step in the right direction.

Among its major provisions, this legislation would eliminate the statute of limitations, under our federal criminal

code, for prosecuting certain sex crimes against children and child abduction offenses. This provision recognizes that victims of such crimes often do not come forward until years after the abuse, out of shame or a fear of further humiliation. It is important that a sexual predator still be held accountable once a sexual abuse victim courageously chooses to come forward.

In addition, this bill would call for those who produce or distribute child pornography to be included in the national sex offender registry. As stated by the United States Supreme Court more than two decades ago, child pornography "is intrinsically related to the sexual abuse of children." Families need to know when a child pornographer moves into the neighborhood.

To assist States in finding their missing and runaway children, our bill also would authorize a new, grants-to-States program that encourages technology enhancements in the States' Amber Alert Communications Plans. Similar language, authored by Congressman Mark Foley, already has passed the House of Representatives as part of the Child Abduction Prevention Act, H.R. 1104. This language builds on the national Amber Alert legislation authored by Senator HUTCHISON and passed by the Senate earlier this year. Under the bill I introduced yesterday, this new grant program would be authorized at \$5 million per year in each of fiscal years 2004 through 2007.

Finally, our bill would require the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences to conduct a study for Congress on the feasibility of having Internet Service Providers monitor online traffic to detect child pornography sites. The study also would examine both the extent to which credit cards are used to facilitate the sale of online child pornography and options for encouraging greater reporting of such illicit transactions to law enforcement officials.

Our bill would help ensure that our children are protected from the most treacherous of criminals. This is a fight we need to win and a fight for which we must give our law enforcement officers every tool at our disposal. I urge my colleagues to support the enactment of S. 810.

THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL: UNITED AGAINST TERROR

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes to talk to my colleagues in the Senate about the important relationship America has with our friends in Israel, and the crucial role that this relationship plays in the ongoing War on Terror.

As American and Coalition troops continue military operations to liberate the people of Iraq, it is important to recall that amidst all of the criticism in the world community for American actions, there has been at least one nation that has steadfastly

stood by our side since September 11 and even before.

That nation is the State of Israel.

Americans awoke fully to the realities of terrorism on that fateful morning in September, 2001. But for the children of Israel, acts of terrorism are an all too common occurrence. Israel long ago learned all too well about the true nature of the threat we face, and their assistance in combating that threat has been invaluable to the American people.

American support for Israel was strong even before September 11, but I believe it is even stronger now. It is strong in the Congress, in the White House, and throughout America.

Israel is our greatest friend in a very troubled region. This is as it should be; Israel has suffered greatly, in blood and treasure, and deserves strong American support. Israel has been an island of stability in a turbulent Middle Eastern sea.

That is why I have strongly supported economic and military aid to Israel, including the \$9 billion in loan guarantees and \$1 billion in FMF funds now pending before Congress as part of the supplemental spending bill to pay for the War on Terror. And that is why I have signed a letter to President Bush urging him to remain true to his vision for peace between Israel and the Palestinians as stated in his historic June 24, 2002, Rose Garden speech.

Since September 2000, when Yasser Arafat rejected the Camp David offer put forth by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak—and the subsequent, even more generous Taba offer backed by President Clinton that would have granted the Palestinians a sovereign state on 97 percent of the West Bank and Gaza, removed the majority of Israeli settlements, and allowed for Palestinian control over the Temple Mount—Israel has faced an onslaught of organized terrorism against its men, women and children.

The Dolphinarium disco, a Sbarro pizzeria, the Moment Café, a Passover seder—all were targets of homicide bombers sent by Palestinian terror groups who have been permitted to operate freely within Palestinian society by Arafat's Palestinian Authority.

I actually ate once at that pizzeria. In 1999, I visited Israel and spent a week there so I could better understand its history and events. On one of our last nights, my wife, Mary and I, along with our friends decided to eat out at that restaurant. To later then actually see a place with which you are familiar destroyed in a senseless act of violence really helps to put these chillingly serious matters in perspective.

It is a perspective that Israelis live with every day, and it is a perspective more and more Americans are coming to understand.

On the surface, these acts of terrorism are barbaric. But, on a deeper level, they also represent the utter failure of Arafat to live up to his commitment to Israel and the United States,

made as part of the 1993 Oslo peace accords, and for which Arafat was ironically given the Nobel Peace Prize, to renounce violence and crack down on terrorism.

Let me be perfectly clear: there is no moral equivalence between those who send teenagers to blow themselves up in crowded Israeli cafes and a government that must utilize its armed forces in order to defend its citizens.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has no choice but to fight a war against the terrorist infrastructure in the Palestinian territories so long as Arafat's police forces are doing nothing to stop terrorism, and worse, aiding it.

President Bush was exactly right when in his June 24 Rose Garden speech he called on the Palestinian people to elect new leaders untainted by terror, to build a democracy, and to end the scourge of terror, if they truly wanted the United States to recognize a Palestinian state. And it is vital that any "roadmap" toward the establishment of a Palestinian state be based on Palestinian performance, not timetables. Further, this performance should be judged by the party most trusted by Israelis—the United States—and not the United Nations, France, Russia or others.

On September 11, 2001, Israelis spontaneously gathered on the streets to mourn for the victims of that day's brutal attacks. Israel immediately offered the United States whatever assistance it might need. Israelis know terrorism, but they will never become inured to it.

At a time when Israel is treated as a pariah by the U.N. and much of Europe, when American academics seek to have universities divest from Israel, when anti-Semitic language reminiscent of the worst days of Nazism are considered fair game, it is imperative that the United States stand in solidarity with its true friend and ally, the State of Israel.

U.S. RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, as U.S.-led coalition forces act to remove Saddam Hussein from power, I would like to speak about another conflict in the Middle East that is, unfortunately, all too often in the news for the wrong reasons.

During the opening days of Operation Iraqi Freedom, U.S. forces seized two key airfields, known as H2 and H3, in Western Iraq. It was from these airfields that 39 Scud missiles were launched against Israel during the first Gulf War in 1991, prompting chaos and panic. While Israel was fortunate that the Scud strikes were ineffective, many more people died from heart failure blamed on war-related stress—68—than from the missile strikes themselves—2.

It was the intent of Saddam Hussein to prompt backlash by Arab nations against the U.S.-led coalition should Israel respond with military force to

the Scud attacks. That concern remains valid today.

Much of the current opposition in the Muslim community to military action against Saddam Hussein stems from their desire to see an end to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The United States policy toward Israel has been roundly criticized by some as lopsided in its support. There is no question that the United States provides Israel with more foreign assistance than any other nation—and deservedly so.

The United States played a critical role in the establishment of Israel in 1948. Our two nations are bound closely by historic and cultural ties as well as by mutual interests. As a key ally, and the only democracy in the Middle East, she deserves our support.

This does not mean, however, that the United States and Palestinians cannot build a similarly positive relationship.

On March 14, President Bush reiterated his support for the creation of a peaceful Palestinian State. I agree, and share the President's vision of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

I welcome the appointment of Mahmoud Abbas as Prime Minister and applaud the Palestinian Authority's decision to rebuff Yasir Arafat's attempts to retain power over the Cabinet.

I am not convinced, however, that these actions alone are enough to warrant the United States' full endorsement. The Palestinian Authority must crack down on those terrorist organizations that seek to derail any prospects for peace in the Middle East. Groups like Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade.

I pose this simple test. If the Israeli military were to withdraw its forces to pre-1967 boundaries, what is the likelihood that Palestinian terrorist organizations would end their suicide attacks against innocent Israelis?

Likewise, if attacks by Palestinian terrorists were to end, what is the likelihood that Israeli troops would end their excursions into Palestinian held land?

At present, I would suggest the latter is a much more likely scenario.

Israel has every right to defend herself against these terrorist attacks—and the United States should not endorse efforts that would undermine Israel's national security.

There are those who suggest that U.N. peacekeepers should be sent in, or that the Middle East "quartet"—the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations—should present a roadmap for peace.

The United States should not—must not—be drawn into endorsing any "roadmap" that does not require the dismantling of the operational capabilities and financial support of terrorist groups within a Palestinian state. When Palestinian leaders refuse to crack down on terrorist organiza-

tions, Israel has every right to take the necessary measures to protect its national security.

Certainly, there is a role for the international community to play in the process. To provide assurances to both sides that their interests will not be steamrolled.

But, for true peace to be achieved, it is inherent that Israel and the Palestinian people reach a peace accord between themselves, without outside influence. An agreement dictated and enforced by a third party will not result in long lasting peace.

History has shown that peace cannot be achieved with Yasir Arafat in charge of the Palestinian Authority. At the Camp David summit in July 2000, then-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered Chairman Arafat a remarkable array of concessions. Unfortunately, Arafat was unable to muster the political courage to accept these concessions—because to accept would mean the end of his reign; the end of his power over the Palestinian people. Yasir Arafat was not willing to make that sacrifice for peace in the Middle East.

We have seen this type of behavior from Arafat in the past. There is no indication that it will change in the future.

But now, the Palestinian Authority has moved past Yasir Arafat. The position of Prime Minister has been created. A Prime Minister has been appointed. The power to appoint a cabinet is his alone. The potential is there for truly significant reform.

This is encouraging. But it is only a beginning. Now, they must recognize that terror and violence do not work. That arrested extremists must remain in jail. That denouncing suicide attacks entails more than just words.

Certainly, Israel must do its part. The establishment of settlements in the territories seized in the 1967 war must be stopped. Retaliatory violence against innocent Palestinians must be curtailed. I was pleased to read that on March 24, Israeli troops dismantled an illegal Jewish settlement near Hebron. This crackdown on settlements must continue.

There is a dual responsibility here. Israeli and Palestinian authorities must prevent extremists on both sides from setting and driving the agenda. The continued acts of violence and aggression only demonstrate that some groups in the region will always oppose a peace agreement. These groups must be placed on the sidelines. They must be delegitimized.

Peace is possible. But it takes real effort by both sides to make it happen. We have seen significant concessions from Israel in the past. Yasir Arafat was unwilling to reciprocate. I am hopeful that Prime Minister Abbas proves more amenable.